

Pull Through by orphan_account

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Summary:

Steve goes home after *everything* and finds himself face-to-face with his father, drunk off his ass, along with a shitload of other problems he sure as hell didn't ask for. See also: everything goes to shit, and Steve is broken in more ways than one.

Luckily, Dustin and Hopper are there to pick up the pieces.

I own nothing but the plot, unbeta'd, barely edited, trigger warning (see tags). First Stranger Things fic. Love you guys! x

Pull Through

Steve Harrington was no rule-follower. In fact, he was quite possibly the furthest thing from a rule-follower one could find. But, hey - he'd kept his kids safe, and in Steve's mind, that was all that mattered.

So, he really didn't feel that bad about sneaking into his house in the middle of the night after everything went down. He had blood on his face and a stiffness in his joints - damn it, Billy - but all in all, he felt like everything had ended up alright. Sure, his father might give him shit about sneaking out, but Steve's adrenaline-fueled mind wasn't too concerned. As long as Mr. Harrington wasn't drunk, everything would be fine.

Of course, Steve was forgetting that luck was never on his side. After carefully twisting the knob, closing the door without a sound, he found himself face to face with his father, reeking of alcohol. Steve sighed, bracing himself before meeting the eyes of the tipsy man before him.

“What the hell do you think you’re doing?” Mr. Harrington spit. His drunken mind didn’t acknowledge the bruises adorning his son’s face, or the exhausted look in Steve’s eyes. All he saw was another mistake.

“Dad, I-”

“No, you fucked up again. I’ve had enough of this shit, it’s time you learned some consequences.” Steve’s father began advancing toward him, his steps wobbly yet determined.

Steve held his hands up in a placating gesture. “Calm down, I’m sorry. I got caught up in something, didn’t mean to go this late. Where’s mom?”

“She left.”

“...What?”

“She’s gone. Prob’ly ‘cause of you, it’s all yer fault,” his father

slurred. If anyone asked, Steve would probably deny the tears in his eyes. He'd known it would probably come to this, but... it still hurt. His mom had up and left without a word to her only son, leaving him alone with an angry drunkard.

“Okay, um, I’m just gonna get to bed, and-”

“No! You’re not going to fucking bed, you need to learn some fucking consequences!” Mr. Harrington’s voice was dangerously low; Steve shivered almost imperceptibly. The last time his father was like this, well... things hadn’t ended well. Yet, judging by the number of bottles strewn across the living room floor, Steve was honestly surprised his father was still standing, let alone articulating full sentences.

“What do you want from me, Dad?” Steve’s voice was tired. The adrenaline was fading; Steve was gradually leaning more heavily on the doorframe.

Mr. Harrington pulled him inside by the wrist and slammed the door. As soon as Steve was inside, his father shoved him to the ground.

“You’re a fucking screw-up, you know that? Huh? You’re the damn reason your mother left!”

Steve’s face burned. He took a step back, hoping to diffuse his father’s liquid rage. Instead, his father lunged.

“I’m going to fucking kill you, you little shit,” he snarled. Mr. Harrington slammed Steve against the wall and socked him in his already bruised face. Steve gasped, his jaw smarting. His father had hit him.

Mr. Harrington wasn’t done. He shoved his shoulder into Steve’s chest, knocking the breath from his lungs, before slamming his fist into Steve’s gut. Over and over, an endless plethora of punches against Steve’s abused body. It’d been so long since his father last hit him... Steve had hoped that maybe his dad was getting better. Stupid, he thought. Naive.

With the shock of his father attacking him, the aches from his

previous fights, and the literally breathtaking assaults to his gut, it took Steve too long to realize hey, you need to defend yourself.

Shoving his father off, Steve wiped the blood trickling from his newly re-split lip. Staggering to his feet, he tried to walk past his father toward the door - he could find somewhere else to stay for the night. Just as his fingers grasped the doorknob, he was jerked back by an arm around his neck.

“You’re not going anywhere, shithead,” Mr. Harrington snarled, spittle flying. Steve clawed at his father’s bruising grip on his neck. Steve’s father shoved him against the wall, squeezing him by the neck. Steve’s feet dangled above the ground and his face was turning purple. His cocky facade was gone, leaving only a terrified boy. Steve’s head spun, strangled gasps escaping him.

Mr. Harrington dropped his breathless son at last. Steve’s throat was raw as he filled his empty lungs, sinking to the floor. The reprieve, of course, was fleeting. Mr. Harrington grabbed Steve by the hair and began dragging him toward the hall. Catching sight of where they were headed - fuck, he’s not gonna put me in the fucking hall closet, is he? - Steve flailed in his father’s firm grip.

--When Steve was nine, his father had locked him in the hall closet after he’d flunked a test. He’d left him there all night.--

“No, fuck, wait -” Using the last of his energy, Steve struggled desperately, but it was all for naught. Steve was vaguely aware of a crash and searing pain in his leg.

His father shoved him into the hall closet and slammed the door. The clink of the lock was like a dagger to Steve’s heart.

Suddenly, Steve was nine again. It was too dark, too small. He couldn’t breathe. “Dad, please,” he banged on the door, shaking the frame, but was too weak to do any damage. His chest was tight; not again, fuck, please not again. Steve gasped, his abused body betraying him, as spots clouded his vision. Everything blurred; then, there was darkness. Sweet, blissful darkness.

XXX

When Steve greeted consciousness, it was dark. Everything was blurry and his head was pounding. He could hear the television playing; his father was still home. Sitting up with a grimace and a gasp, Steve tried to assess his injuries in the darkness. His head hurt like hell, as did his ribs. Nothing seemed to warrant a hospital trip, except his possible concussion. Fuck, some painkillers would be fantastic, though.

Steve sagged against the wall. Who knew how long he'd been asleep; long enough to get a crick in his neck, at least. Steve pounded on the door.

"Dad! Unl'ck the fcking door!" Steve slurred through swollen lips. His response was the sound of shattering glass and a shaking of the doorframe.

"No, shithead! You gotta learn some fucking r'spect, fuck-up!" Mr. Harrington was slurring about as badly as Steve. His father was no lightweight; how many beers had he gone through?

More pressing, however, was the issue of getting out of the fucking closet. Steve jiggled the knob and tried kicking the door, but that was when - fuck - a screaming pain in his leg became apparent. Steve's breath caught and he groaned in pain. Eyeing the sizable glass shard sticking out of his shin, Steve fought the sudden urge to vomit. He had to get out of there. Fast.

Feeling around in his pockets, Steve wanted to cry when his fingers met the surface of a walkie-talkie. When Dustin had given it to him, he'd sneered. Now, however... seeing it was like seeing the face of God himself.

Taking a deep breath, Steve turned it on and hissed, "Dustin! Dustin, are you there?"

"Who the fuck are you talking to in there?" Shit, his dad heard. Steve scrambled as he heard his father's footsteps approaching.

"Dustin, I need help." Steve hated the way his voice cracked and rasped as he prayed for his friend to answer.

"...Steve?"

Steve wanted to cry; Dustin had answered. He could get help.

"Yeah, it's me. I need h'lp, my dad, he beat me up, and I can't get out, and-"

"Hey! Gimme that!" The closet door swung open as Mr. Harrington lunged at his son. Steve twisted, keeping the walkie-talkie from his grasp.

"Dustin I need you to call Hopper please he's gonna-"

Mr. Harrington snatched the walkie-talkie from Steve's clammy grasp.
"What the hell did you just do?"

XXX

When Dustin had first heard Steve's voice on the walkie-talkie, he'd nearly shit his pants. Steve, calling him? Of course, that shock was nothing compared to what he felt when he heard Steve speak.

"Dustin, I need help."

Holy shit, Dustin thought. Finally regaining some semblance of awareness, he replied, "...Steve?"

"Yeah, it's me. I need h'lp, my dad, he beat me up, and I can't get out, and-"

What. The. Actual. Fuck.

Dustin could hear Steve's dad in the background. Shit, if what Steve was saying was true, his friend was in some deep shit.

"Dustin I need you to call Hopper please he's gonna-"

The line went dead.

Ohmygodohmygodohmygod" Dustin let out a string of (not PG) expletives as he sprinted to the phone.

"Hopper! Hopper you gotta go help Steve! He called me, he's in

trouble! I think his dad's hurtin' 'im."

Hopper swore. He hadn't liked Steve much at first, but seeing how much he'd cared for the kids had changed his mind. Hopper had come to treat Steve like a son, and nobody hurt his kids.

As Hopper hopped in his car, Dustin hopped on his bike.

Both rode toward the Harrington residence at top speed. Dustin just hoped he'd make it in time.

XXX

Steve had experience with staying quiet about pain. He was no stranger to fights, and this wasn't the first time his father had roughed him up. But when his father dragged him from the closet, his arm came out of its socket with a sickening pop, and Steve really couldn't blame himself for the girlish screech that escaped him. Fuck, his shoulder was burning.

Mr. Harrington was saying something - Steve heard the words "useless" and "fag" - but Steve was more focused on keeping the contents of his stomach where they belonged.

Steve's dad just kept hitting him; when Steve's balance failed, Mr. Harrington resorted to kicking.

Steve's world was spinning nearly as fast as his stomach. He vaguely registered his stomach finally revolting. He weakly turned to his side - fuck not that shoulder, other side - and puked. If he was a bit more lucid, Steve might've noticed the flecks of blood in his vomit.

To be fair, Mr. Harrington didn't notice either.

"Fuck... cleann that sh't up." Mr. Harrington was tilting and slurring more noticeably. He stumbled out the front door, leaving Steve alone on the ground (which, it should be noted, was acquiring an increasingly large crimson stain beneath the pained boy).

Steve was tired. He just wanted to sleep, to not be in pain. Before he passed out, his last coherent thought was that he just really hoped Dustin would help him.

When Hopper pulled up to Steve's house, he'd barely stopped the car before sprinting toward the front door. He nearly ran into Mr. Harrington, who was evidently drunk off his ass. The pit in Hopper's stomach deepened as he quickly cuffed the tipsy man to the front porch railing.

Dustin pulled up seconds later - damn, that kid was fast. Hop wasn't paying much attention to that, though. No, Jim Hopper was staring at the prone figure of one bloody, bruised Steve Harrington, looking not unlike a dead man as he lay on his living room floor.

Later, Hopper would be hard-pressed to admit that he stood stock still for a moment and fought the urge to either vomit or murder Mr. Harrington.

When he (finally) came to his senses, Hopper flew to the kid - god, he really was just a kid, wasn't he? - and checked for a pulse. The weak beat he felt probably brought him more comfort than it should have because damn, that boy looked like he was on death's door.

"Holy shit, Steve!" Dustin's lisp was prominent in his haste. He sprinted to Steve's side. "Is he okay?"

Hopper swallowed, hard. "No. But he will be," he answered shortly, keeping the "maybe" to himself. Hop radioed for an ambulance ("it needs to be here like, yesterday") then set about assessing the victim.

Police Officer Mode™ was easier than I-know-this-kid,-he's-a-good-kid,-and-he's-nearly-dead mode.

The victim had multiple bruises around his face and neck - god, the kid was all purples and greens - which suggested a concussion. A peek beneath Steve's- the victim's shirt revealed an even more vibrant array of sickly bruising. Hopper was no doctor, but he knew it wasn't good for the kid to be unconscious.

"Should we wake him up?" Dustin asked. The kid wasn't an idiot; he knew Steve was in bad shape. Hopper nodded.

Dustin tapped Steve's cheek gently, trying and failing to find a patch

of skin free of bruises.

"Steve, you gotta wake up, man. Come on, I know you're... hurt, but I need you awake, okay? 'Cause you might be really hurt and if you are, you shouldn't be sleeping 'cause you might, like, die, or something, and-"

Dustin was rambling and he knew it. He only stopped because one Steve Harrington was now regarding him with hazy eyes and a mix between a smirk and a grimace.

"Hey, buddy," Dustin ruffled his hair, but Steve winced. Frowning, Dustin quickly retracted his hand, belatedly noticing the faint specks of blood on Steve's scalp. "Sorry."

Steve shook his head. Well, he tried to, and only ended up dizzying himself and promptly vomited to the side. Dustin jumped back, cringing.

"Come on, man, next time you're gonna spill your guts, do it on the other side." Steve did his sort-of-smirk, before slowly picking his hand up to rest on his opposite shoulder. The sort-of-smirk became a full-on grimace; Dustin frowned. He gently lowered Steve's shirt sleeve, much to Steve's chagrin, and gasped at the discolored, nearly-poking-out bone. "Um, Hopper?"

The sheriff turned, not fully listening. "Hmm?"

"Hop, his shoulder. Look," Dustin insisted, tugging on the Sheriff's sleeve. Hopper gasped.

"Shit. Steve, look at me, bud. I gotta reset your shoulder." Steve's reaction - or, more accurately, his lack of a reaction - scared Hopper. "Steve."

Dustin tapped his cheek. "Steve, Hop's gonna fix your shoulder, okay? It'll hurt for a second."

"M'kay"

"Okay, on three," Hopper enunciated, locking eyes with the halfway conscious teen. "One, two-"

Pop.

"Fuck!"

Steve arched his back, squirming in pain. Gritting his teeth, he slurred, "You said y'd do it on three."

"At least we know he can talk," Hopper muttered.

"Hey, Steve, can you talk to me? The ambulance is almost here, I can hear the sirens. Tell me what happened, while we wait."

Hopper hesitated, wanting to spare the kid, but Dustin had a point. Steve had to stay awake.

"Got home fr'm Byers house, dad was dr'nk," Steve was slurring so thickly it was hard to understand him. "Was mad 'cause mom left."

"Left? Where'd she go?" Hopper gave him A Look™. Dustin realized too late what Steve meant.

"Gone. Sick of me, I g'ess. D'dn't say bye. Dad said it was my flt." Steve's breaths were coming quicker; Dustin grabbed his hand. He'd never seen Steve so open, so vulnerable. "Is it my flt, D'stin? Did I m'ke her leave?"

Hopper threw up.

Dustin looked seconds away from doing the same.

"No, buddy, it's not your fault. You didn't make her leave, not at all. She... she's lucky to have you, she just, she just didn't realize it."

"M'kay."

There was not a dry eye in the room.

Dustin turned back to gingerly running his fingers through Steve's hair. Steve was struggling to keep his heavy eyelids from closing.

"Keep talking, Steve. What happened after you got home?"

"Dad was yell'ng at me. He h't me. Tried to g't out, choked me. Th'nk

he threw a bottle." Dustin followed Steve's wandering gaze and finally noticed the glass shard protruding from Steve's shin; he would've face palmed if Steve wasn't clinging to his hand. How had he not noticed? Wordlessly, Dustin gestured to Hopper (who, impossibly, turned even paler) before nodding for Steve to continue.

"He put me in cl'set."

"What?"

"He put me in cl'set."

Dustin was positively green. Hopper wanted to puke again. Suddenly, Dustin realized something.

"Wait, Steve, when did he put you in the closet?"

Steve was nodding off; Dustin shook him. "When, Steve?"

"T'ld you. Aft'r got back fr'm Byers'."

"When'd you get out?" Dustin breathed.

"Wh'n... wh'n I call'd you." Steve's eyelids slid shut just as several paramedics burst through the door with medical supplies and a stretcher. Dustin and Hopper were pushed aside as Steve was surrounded and carried out.

"Hopper?"

"Yeah, Dustin?"

"Steve was in that closet for almost thirteen hours."

XXX

While he was sitting in the waiting room, Hopper made some calls. He called Dustin's parents - even though Dustin adamantly refused to leave until he saw Steve. He called Joyce to let her know what happened and to ask her to keep Eleven at her house for another night. He called Steve's mom, and nearly threw up again when she said, in so many words, that she didn't give a shit about her son.

"Did you arrest Steve's dad?" Dustin's groggy voice startled Hopper; he'd thought the kid was asleep.

"Yeah. Brought him in on the way here."

Dustin nodded, deep in thought. He returned to his position of resting his curly-haired head against Hopper's shoulder. The two remained there for hours; each time a doctor came out, they'd hold their breath, but the doctor would call someone else's name.

Finally, after what Dustin called "a shit-ton" of waiting (promptly followed by Hopper's hiss of, "Language!"), a tired-looking doctor called, "Steve Harrington?"

Hopper and Dustin were on their feet before the poor woman had finished calling Steve's name. "Is he okay?" Dustin was nearly shouting in her face.

Hopper put a hand on Dustin's shoulder. The doctor took a deep breath.

"Mr. Harrington just came out of surgery and is resting. He had severe bruising on his face, neck, and abdomen. He had one cracked rib and several abrasions that required stitches. He has a nasty concussion and will be wearing a sling for his shoulder," she paused, eyeing them. "Mr. Harrington also had a large shard of glass lodged in his shin. We removed it, but it was deep and caused considerable damage. He won't be up walking around anytime soon."

Hopper simply nodded, but Dustin was practically buzzing. "Can we see him? Please? We've been waiting for so fuc-, uh, a very long time."

"He's in room 111, but he's asleep, so you should-" The doctor cut herself off with a grimace as Hopper and Dustin flew past her.

XXX

When Dustin entered Steve's hospital room, he could've sworn his friend was dead. Steve's face looked like crap; it was a mess of purples and greens that barely constituted a recognizable face. He looked so small in that hospital bed, nothing like the fiercely

protective teen Dustin had come to admire. Steve looked broken.

Steve's shoulder was in a sling, and he had a few stitches on his forehead. Dustin figured his leg was probably bandaged, too.

"He looks like shit," Dustin said, turning to Hopper. Before Hopper could chastise the boy, he was interrupted by a gravelly voice.

"Th'nks a lot, sh'thead."

XXX

Dustin nearly flew to Steve's side. "You're awake! Are you okay? I mean, you're obviously not okay, your dad beat the shit outta you, but I mean, how-"

"Mm fine."

Hopper gingerly rested a hand on Steve's good shoulder. Steve eyed him blearily, as if just noticing his presence.

"How you feelin', kid?"

Steve's thumbs up would've been more believable if it wasn't shaking and accompanied by a grimace.

"I brought your father in. He'll be locked up for a while." Hopper was treading lightly, unsure how the teen would react. The teen in question was having trouble breathing.

Steve couldn't get air in. His mom left, his dad was locked up... where the fuck was he supposed to go?

Dustin grabbed Steve's hand. "Hey, buddy, calm down. Should I call a nurse?" Steve's eyes grew impossibly wider as he frantically shook his head.

"Steve, look at me," Hopper instructed. "Follow my breathing. In and out, you got it. In and out."

Once Steve could breathe again, Hopper continued. "You're pretty banged up, kid. Concussion, cracked rib, and glass in your leg. You're

not gonna be up and around for a while. So, uh, if you're okay with it, you can stay with me and Eleven for a while. At least until you get back on your feet, then we can figure something out."

Steve's eyes were already falling closed. "Th'nk you," he sighed.

Hopper had to nearly drag Dustin from the room, but he eventually got the kid to go home and rest. "I'll stay with him, okay? You can come visit once you're smelling better."

XXX

Surprisingly, Steve was released from the hospital only a week later. He was off concussion watch - "Can I just sleep one fucking night without people asking me the president's name at 3 AM?" - and his bruises were fading. His ribs and leg were the main concern; hence, the wheelchair that Steve was refusing to use.

"I'm fine," he insisted, sitting up in the hospital bed. "I don't need a fucking wheelchair."

He stood quickly but collapsed back onto the bed before Dustin could yell, "Shit!"

Dustin snickered. "Yeah, you sure look fine."

"Shut up, shithead," Steve muttered through his gasps. The pain in his leg was so freaking bad, but he wasn't about to admit it.

Hopper smirked, pushing the wheelchair closer. "You ready to quit being so damn stubborn?"

Steve sat in the wheelchair with a glare.

Dustin didn't even try to hide his laughter.

XXX

Steve was panting by the time they made it to Hopper's couch. The wheelchair couldn't go up the porch steps, so he'd been forced to hobble in, with Hopper's help.

Hopper, for his part, just really wanted some coffee.

Once he was situated on the couch, Steve was out like a light. As he drifted off, he heard Hopper mutter something about "coffee and contemplation, not hospital trips."

Eleven locked eyes with Hopper. "Okay?"

Hopper nodded. "He just needs some rest. He'll be fine."

Eleven nodded. As she headed back to her room, a blanket draped itself over Steve.

XXX

Admittedly, Hopper knew he'd been foolish to think the kid would come out of everything without any mental scars. He really shouldn't have been surprised when he was woken up by screaming coming from his living room at 1 AM.

Hopper flew out of bed. Entering the living room, what he saw hurt his heart. Steve was sweaty and tossing in his sleep. His hands shot out, battling invisible demons, and he was muttering pleas. Hopper heard, "don't" and "please" before he snapped into action and shook Steve's shoulder.

"Steve. C'mon, bud, wake up," he whisper-screamed. Steve shot straight into a seated position before hissing and clutching his ribs. He was breathing heavily; Hopper wanted to shoot himself for being so oblivious. The kid had been attacked by that Hargrove kid, helped fight literal freaking monsters, then been beaten to hell by his own father. Not to mention his mom had left, he'd been locked in a closet for half a day, and he'd just gotten out of the hospital. Of course the kid was gonna have nightmares.

Hopper went to grab Steve's shoulder, but the kid let out a high-pitched whine and lunged backward. Steve was shaking, tears streaming freely. Hopper was frozen.

To be fair, Hopper's police training didn't cover how to comfort traumatized teenagers at 1 AM.

"Steve. Bud, you gotta wake up for me. It was just a dream, okay? I'm sorry for touching you, let's getcha cleaned up, alright?" Hopper kept rambling - he'd been hanging out with Dustin too much - until Steve's eyes showed some amount of clarity. Instantly, the teen turned bright red.

"Sorry," he muttered.

"Hey, nuh-uh. Don't be embarrassed, everyone gets nightmares. You've been through a lot." Hopper almost reached for Steve's shoulder again, but stopped himself. "I'm gonna grab you a washcloth, okay? We'll get you cleaned up, then you can go back to sleep." Steve nodded, still breathing heavily. Hopper stood, ignoring the aching in his joints, and walked briskly to the kitchen. As he waited for the water to heat, washcloth in hand, he heard Steve collecting himself in the living room. The kid was still breathing hard, muttering a few breathless "shit"s.

Walking back into the living room, Hopper offered up the wet washcloth. Steve took it with a shaky hand. He lifted it and gingerly wiped his clammy face, all while avoiding Hopper's eyes like the plague. Hopper sighed.

"Hey. Look at me," he muttered softly. When Steve finally met his gaze, his eyes were undeniably glassy. "I know you're hurt right now. A lot's happened, a lot of bad things, but we'll get through it, okay? No matter how many washcloths and sleepless nights it takes. Okay?"

Steve nodded and his eyes drooped. He rested his head once again, but his eyes remained stubbornly open. "Don't wanna sleep."

"Yeah, well, I don't know if you've heard, but humans generally need sleep to function. Come on, I'll sit with you for a bit."

"You don't have to."

"Nah, it's fine. I'm already up, aren't I?" Settling into a more comfortable position, Hopper sighed. "We'll get you through this, no matter what it takes. You'll pull through."

"Besides, Dustin'll have my ass if you don't."

Author's Note:

First Stranger Things fic! I binged the frick out of that show and it has since consumed my life. I'm an amateur writer, so some response would be fantastic, even if it's **constructive** criticism. This idea's been floating around in my head for awhile. Not sure about this one, but I hashed it out and figured I'd put it up here anyway and see how it goes. Thoughts? Comments and kudos are deeply appreciated! Hope you enjoyed! Love you all x